in the Embassy, refusing to leave the premises. This is after repeated assurances giving by the officers of the Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour, including Minister of Social Affairs and Labour that it would be ensured that they will not be subjected to any harassment or persecution if they go back to work. However, they are adamant that they would return to work only after a salary of KD 85 is agreed to by the company.

Nurses are exempted from the requirement of Emigration Clearance under present rules. Only in the case of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, emigration clearance is required. In case of any breach of contract, there are adequate mechanisms for redressal in the countries of employment. Therefore, no change in existing regulatory mechanism is envisaged.

[Translation]

Illegal Indian Labourers

*9. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether several illegal Indian labourers were expelled from United Arab Emirates during the last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the number of labourers so expelled;

(c) whether the Government propose to assist them in getting back their employment; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTRENAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) to (d) It is estimated that in 1996, about 60,000 Indians returned to India availing of the amnesty scheme declared by the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for illegal aliens. The Amnesty scheme, which was originally effective from July 1, 1996 to September 30, 1996 was later extended upto October 31, 1996.

Special counters were set up by the Government of India in select Passport Offices to enable expeditious issue of travel documents to all those who had returned on emergency certificates. The Indian Missions in the UAE kept in close touch with the local authorities to ensure that the returnees did not have any restrictions placed on their return to UAE.

The Government of India estimates that upto May 31, 1997, at least 45,000 Indians had got emigration clearance to take up jobs in the UAE. This number would include a large number of those who had earlier returned from the UAE. To facilitate clearance, Government of India had even suspended the requirement for employment contracts to be pre-screened by Indian Missions in the UAE, so that there was single window clearance of fresh recruitment.

[English]

Development in Afghanistan

*10. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how Government of India views the development in Afghanistan;

(b) whether the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan has a direct bearing on the policies of South Asia; and

(c) the steps the Government of India has taken to see that the situation becomes normal in Afghanistan?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) to (c) India and Afghanistan share historical linkages, civilizational and cultural affinities and warm ties of friendship and cooperation dating back to the remote past. The continuing instability and turmoil and the resultant tragedy and suffering is, therefore, a cause for continuing concern.

These development in Afghanistan, which are closely monitored by Government, have a bearing on India's security and affect the peace and stability of the region.

Government have also been diplomatically active on Afghanistan. There is recognition that India has vital interests in Afghanistan. Government were invited and participated in the Regional Conference on Afghanistan hosted by Iran on 29-30 October, 1996 in Tehran. The UN convened meetings in November 1996 and April 1997 of countries with knowledge, interest and influence regarding Afghanistan to which India was invited. Government's participation was positive and constructive. India also took part in the UN sponsored International Forum for Assistance to Afghanistan held in Ashgabat in January, 1997. India has also been in close touch with countries who take an interest in Afghan affairs.

Our programme of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in the form of medicines, foodstuff and clothing and supply and fitting of artificial limbs has continued. In addition, India has also pledged to provide humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan through the UN mechanism.

Misuse of Central Fund by States

*11. SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Planning Commission has warned Chief Ministers that their annual allocations will be drastically cut if they are found misusing funds given for completing Centrally funded projects in the States;

(b) if so, whether the Planning Commission noticed in the past that many State Governments had diverted their funds from Centrally funded projects to other projects; and

(c) if so, names of the States held responsible in

this regard and the action proposed to be taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI RATNMALA D. SAVANOOR): (a) to (c) The Normal Plan Assistance by Central Government for State Plans is formula based and is given in the form of Block Loans/Grants and is not linked to any specific projects. Only Special Category States are permitted to use upto 20% of normal plan assistance for meeting their non-plan gap. Special central assistance is also being provided to the States for basic minimum services (BMS) and Area Development Programmes but these also generally not linked to any particular project. Central assistance is also being provided for Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) which is project based and linked to matching share by State Government. The implementation of AIBP including sanctioning the irrigation projects, release of funds etc., is being carried out by the concerned administrative Ministry.

Central Assistance is also provided for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) which is linked to State's contribution unless it is 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme and is released by various Central Ministries/Departments depending on their implementation. The expenditure on these projects/schemes are monitored by the concerned ministries and not by the Planning Commission.

Illegal Areas Occupied by China

*12. SHRI P. NAMGYAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total area of India (in sq. kms.) illegally occupied by China, State-wise and Sector-wise;

(b) whether a Menser village of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir with sizable population is situated well inside Western Tibet on the northern or north-west side of the holy Kailash Prabhat;

(c) if so, whether the Government have raised the issue of Menser village with the Chinese counterparts in their many talks held in the past; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) The area under occupation by China in Jammu & Kashmir is approximately 38,000 sq. kms. In addition under the so called Sino-Pakistan boundary agreement of 1963, Pakistan illegally ceded approximately 5,120 sq. kms of Indian territory in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to China.

(b) and (c) During the India-China Officials level talks on the Boundary Question in 1960, Minsar village was referred to by the two sides. The location of this village was then described as being approximately 200 kms. from Ladakh and on the route to Mansarovar.

(d) Does not arise.

Role of Planning Commission

*13. SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to confine the role of Planning Commission to a few sectors of activities that require detailed planning and delegate the responsibility of power for planning in regard to the remaining sectors to Central Ministries and States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI RATNMALA D. SAVANOOR): (a) to (c) The role of Planning Commission continue to remain same as given in the Resolution of the Cabinet Secretariat dated the 15th March, 1950 setting up the Planning Commission. However, the Approach Paper to the Ninth Plan envisage formulation and implementation of the Ninth Plan in the spirit of Cooperative Federalism which inter-alia include greater role for the States in the formulation as well as implementation of the Plan schemes. The Approach Paper also envisage preparation of detailed sectoral Plans for certain sectors like power, selected medium and major irrigation projects, critical communication and agricultural development and infrastructure etc.

[Translation]

Computerisation of Employment Exchanges

*14. SHRI VISHVESHWAR BHAGAT:

SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of employment exchanges in the country, State-wise;

(b) the number of computerised employment exchanges in the country, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government propose to make computerisation of employment exchanges a centrally sponsored scheme during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to improve the overall functioning of the employment exchanges in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) The State-wise number of Employment Exchanges in the country and the number of Employment Exchanges which are computerised, upto 1992 is given in the attached Statement.

(c) to (e) As per the decision of the National Development Council (NDC), the Centrally Sponsored Scheme